The Tercentenary of the English Bible

BY MAMIE BAYS.

It is safe to say that no anniversary to be celebrated during the year 1911 will be of such world-wide and such interdenominational interest as that of the tercentenary of the English Bible. It is a well known fact that for almost 300 years the whole of Anglo-Saxon Christendom has been nourished mainly on that translation of the Holy Scriptures familiarly known as the King James or authorized Version. The year 1911 will mark the completion of the third century of this version of the Bible, and the American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and all other organizations of similar import have taken steps to have this anniversary observed in an appropriate manner the world around, and Sunday, April 23, is the day that has been designated as the anniversary day.

The history of biblical translation takes the reader back to the seventh century, when Caedmon, the Benedictine monk, paraphrased in Anglo-Saxon verse portions of the Scripture, while a little later Aldhelm and Guthlac each translated the Psalms into the same language.

The next translator of whom history makes record in this connection was the venerable Bede (675-735); of whom Cuthbert, his scholar, has handed down a touching and impressive picture of his last day on earth. Cuthbert was an eyewitness, and from him it is learned that Bede finished his life as he finished the translation of the Gospel of John, and expired with the name of the Holy Spirit on his lips, chanting the "Gloria Patria."

Then came Alfred the Great, in the ninth century, who prefixed to the laws a paraphrase of the Ten Commandments, and who at the time of his death in 901, was engaged in making a version of the Psalms. He was followed by Eadrith, Bishop of Landisfarne (650) and Aelfric, in the tenth century, who was the author of the Ormulum, a paraphrase of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Other translators followed these in that early period, which is designated as "the darkest hour just before the dawn," that darkness having been dispelled by the Reformation, in which John Wycliffe, called its "morning star," was a prominent factor.

History is uncertain regarding the date of Wycliffe's birth, although 1324 is the generally accepted year. Very little is known of his early life, but he was a student of Oxford, beginning his academic career very early, and holding through his life high university offices and dignities. He was Master of Baliol, and was one of the chaplains of Edward III. He was also one of the commissioners whom Edward III. sent to confer with the delegates appointed by Pope Gregory II. regarding ecclesiastical authority in England. Wycliffe was a priest in orders, but all his life he was a protestant, and increasingly as he grew older. He disputed against transubstantiation, and with great boldness he rejected papal usurpation. Naturally, this brought him into disfavor. As a consequence he was tried for heresy, and his escape from execution was due to the intervention of the Queen Mother.

Wycliffe has been designated as one of the quaternion of great schoolmen by Dr. John Eadie, the Scotch historian, who classes him with Bradwardine, Occam and Duns Scotus. The interest of Wycliffe in Bible translation was not so much academic or scholastic as it was the result of a deep heart experience of divine grace. He began his translation of the Bible with the Apocalypse, and had completed the entire New Testament in 1381, translating the whole from the Latin Vulgate. His death occurred in 1384, before he had completed his translation of the Old Testament, and his friends and followers, Nicholas de Hereford and John Purvey, revised and completed this work which he had begun.

The versions of Wycliffe had a large influence, not only upon his own immediate supporters the Lollards, but also upon the masses of English people. Critics do not agree regarding the relation that the Wycliffe version sustains to that of Tindale, but it is generally conceded by scholars that Tindale was influenced to a large degree in his work of translation by Wycliffe, and Professor George P. March, an eminent authority, goes so far as to say in this connection: "Tindale is merely a full grown Wycliffe," and adds: "The influence of Wycliffe upon Tindale is too palpable to be mistaken, and it cannot be disguised by the grammatical differences, which are the most important points of discrepancy between them."

William Tindale (1484-1536) is recognized as the next great landmark in the history of the English Bible after Wycliffe. His life story was a tragedy worthy of perpetuation. It was while he was a student at Oxford that he gave the first evidence of what he was to be, and this was emphasized when he went to Cambridge, and when, about 1500, he became a tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, of Little Sedbury. He began his controversies with a learned man, who said, "We were better to be without God's laws than the Pope's," and Tindale replied: "I defy the Pope and all his laws," and said further: "If God spare my life, I will cause a boy that driveth a plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost." His life was spared, and he fulfilled his promise abundantly. Throughout his life he worked to give England a translation of the Bible, not from the Vulgate, as was Wycliffe's, but from the Hebrew and Greek, and so well did he perform his work that much of it is read to-day in the King James Version.

Failing to realize his hope of entering the service of Tunstall, Bishop of London, Tindale turned his back upon England and spent a number of years on the Continent, although he did not lose his love for England. He was a thorough scholar, and he made two revisions of the New Testament, after the first issue, and his influence has had much to do with making the present version of the Bible popular, not only with those who are learned, but with the masses as well, his impress being found in the simple dialect which is endowed with permanence.

A period of seventy-five years elapsed between the death of Tindale and publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible, in which the perfection of his labor is seen. During these seventy-five years there were eight versions of the Bible issued, namely: Coverdale's (1535), Matthew's (1537), Taverner's (1539), the Great Bible (1539-'40), Whittingham's New Testament (1557), the Genevan Bible (1560), the Bishops' Bible (1568), Rheims and Douay Version (1582-1609). Then in 1611 came the King James Version, the last link in the chain of versions. The version known as the "Great Bible" was so called on account of its size, fifteen by nine inches. It was largely a revision of Matthew's Version, made by Coverdale.

The Genevan Version was the work of English exiles, who were companions in tribulation for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. This was the first English Bible printed in Roman type, instead of the usual black letter, and it was the first also to break the paragraphs into verses as they appear in the King James Version of to-day. The name "Genevan Version" is taken from the time in which it was issued, and is significant. The focus for the learning of the day at that time was the school of John Calvin, and thither the victims of religious persecution fled for refuge. The forerunner of the Genevan Version was Whittingham's translation of the New Testament, accompanied with a stirring introduction from the pen of Calvin. Whittingham married the sister of Calvin, and it is impossible to estimate the extent of the influence of the great scholar and theologian over this translation of the New Testament, which was the forerunner of the Genevan Version. The Genevan Version was adapted to the needs of the common people, and it contained marginal notes and a running commentary on the text, the commentary being Calvinistic in tone. This version became the household Bible, the people's book, not only in England, but in Scotland also, where John Knox took it in place of Tindale's Version, which he had used up to that time.

When King James I. came to the throne of England, in 1603, he was thirty-six years of age, and for thirty-five years he had been King of Scotland. He called a conference on ecclesiastical matters in January, 1604, in Hampton Court Palace.

Even then there were divisions in the church, which were soon to rend the nation. One occasion for the calling of the conference was the petition from the Puritans, signed by 800 clergymen. Puritanism was growing, and the petition asked for the doing away of the sign of the cross in baptism, the use of the ring in marriage, the reform of the church courts, a better observance of the Sabbath, and provision for the training of preaching ministers. The conference continued for three days, January 14, 15 and 18, but not one of the requests of the petition were granted. The King was one who claimed to possess much theological learning, and he enjoyed displaying the same before the conference. Sir Walter Scott says that King James I. "was reputed to be the most learned fool in Christendom." One act, however, which stands to his credit was that he indorsed the suggestion of Dr. John Reynolds when he made objection to the "Bishop's" Bible, which was at that time the authoritative version of the Bible, and approved the suggestion of Dr. Reynolds that learned men of Oxford and Cambridge should take "some special pains in behalf of one uniform translation." The King had something to do with the selection of the men who were to be the translators, or with the approval of the list. The list was made up by June 30, following the conference in January, and Bancroft, Bishop of London, who had objected to the translation, was notified by the King himself. Fifty-four men were appointed on this list of translators, but the work was done by forty-seven. This number included the principal Hebrew and Greek scholars of the kingdom. It was not until 1607 that the committees got to work, and they were four years engaged with the task before it was ready for the press.

The first edition was a large folio, the text in black letter, illuminated with beautiful initials, the first one significantly bearing the Scotch thistle. The translators furnished also prefaces, tables of lessons and genealogies, but the real value of the book lay not in these, the real value lay in the text itself. It is believed that at least three hundred copies of this first edition of the King James Version of the Bible are yet in existence.

The King James Version of the Bible was itself a revision, and before it was fifty years old plans had been made for its revision. The first of these revisions was ordered by the "Long Parliament," in 1653. This was followed by a number of individual efforts at revision, and still other attempts at revision of certain portions of the Scripture, in which good work was done.

The American Bible Society presented a corrected edition of the Authorized Version in 1851, after almost two years had been spent in correcting typographical errors, discrepancies and other blemishes. This edition was known as the "Standard Bible," but its appearance provoked criticism, and in 1858 the board of managers withdrew the publication.

Another revision was brought out in 1860 and another in 1866 by the American Bible Union, and while it was carefully prepared, it was limited largely to the Baptist denomination on account of the use of the word "immerse." The paragraph form was adopted in this revision, anticipating the Revised Version.

It was in 1870 that the Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury appointed a committee to report on the advisableness of a revision, and a few months later a committee of both houses was elected and instructed to proceed with the work. The New Testament in the Revised Form was issued in 1881, and the Old Testament in 1885. The American committee, in keeping with a mutual understanding, continued its work, and in 1901 issued what is known as the American Standard Revised Version. Only four of the eminent scholars in this country who had a part in this work of revision are living at this time. Other attempts at revision have followed, and it is propable this spirit of revision will contine, but the King James Version will long obtain the influential position which it has held during the past three hundred years in conveying to the world the Word of Life.

OLD BAILEY

BY JEAN CRUPPI

French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Old Bailey! There is nothing remarkable and absolutely nothing monumental in the appearance of the building, the entrance of which looks like the entrance of any of half a dozen banks in Holborn. The courtroom is protected as if against an assault by narrow corridors and short stairways. As soon as you are inside you discover that this birthplace of public justice is not intended for the public, or at least for the great masses that are often attracted by sensational trials. Newspapermen only are on guard there as representatives of the public. The courtroom is small, narrow and dark like a well, smaller than the smallest criminal courtroom in the Paris Palais de Justice.

The people who spend their time in these unattractive surroundings have evidently come on business and not for curiosity. In these ugly, almost poverty stricken surroundings, which do not even show the dignifying patina of age, because they are scrubbed clean, the jury system has been in full power for centuries. Prompted by a persistent public opinion, corruption and violence were followed by the most free and independent legal procedure in the world. In the year 1670, William Penn's case was tried in Old Bailey, when scenes of unspeakable violence were witnessed, and when the members of the jury rushed at the accused, knocked him down, kicked and beat him. To-day proceedings are a little different in the courtroom of Old Bailey.

The only half-way comfortable or decent place in the small courtroom is the platform on which the accused stands. Within its limits, in the dock, he is free, may walk back and forth, sit or stand, just as he pleases. No soldiers sit behind him as in Paris. One warden only sits in the corner, looking more like a clerk than like a jailer. One immediately gets the impression that this prisoner in his dock is an almost sacred being.

He consults his notes, speaks in a loud voice, as if he were a creditor endeavoring to collect a debt, and a creditor he is indeed, for the court owes him the proof of his crime.

In front of the prisoner, separated from him by a small space a narrow hard bench runs along the wall. Here have been sitting from time immemorial the sheriffs and undersheriffs of the city, sometimes also an alderman or perhaps even the Lord Mayor, and at the end, in a place which is not in the centre of the room and which shows no signs of distinction, sits one of the great judges of England. City's officials are quite at home here. According to old tradition they receive the King's judge and are present at the trial wearing their purple robes, the Lord Mayor in the centre, under the baldachin and sword, the sheriffs with their heavy chains of office around the neck, all apparently quite unconcerned and unconscious of their decorative impression, because they are used to it. During the trial they have time to receive bouquets or read scented billets—they are "at home."

At the right of the judge, so close by that he might touch it with his hand, is the inclosure in which the witnesses stand while giving their testimony, and then, on two benches, the twelve members of the jury. Opposite the jury is an uncomfortable terrace, the steps of which are crowded with privileged visitors, witnesses and reporters.

There is also a big table which takes up the entire rear of the courtroom between the desk of the clerk of the court, the dock, the jury box and the lower steps of the platform intended for the audience. At this table sit, close together, the principal lawyers, counsel for the prosecution and counsel for the prisoner.

The impression of this modest courtroom is severe and stern. Not a single ornament relieves the monotonous gray of the walls. It is no place for dramatic effect or loud eloquence. No place for laughter or even for a smile, the London fog rests heavily upon the room, a veil of melancholy and darkness. The only voice that is heard, shrill and penetrating, is the voice of the accused.

The proceedings are calm, without any noise or violent gestures, sometimes with long pauses.

The judge in his red robe and curious wig is bending over his desk and writing all the time. The law bids him put his remarks in writing, and these are later turned over to the jury, to whom they are like photographs of the trial taken by their best witness, for this official is at the same time judge and witness, but never accuser. When he takes a hand it is only to explain his rights to the accused or to tell a too energetic prosecuting attorney that the accused has a claim on fair treatment, but this is very seldom necessary. When the proceedings are over, the judge sums up the case to the jury and when the verdict has been rendered, he imposes the sentence.

One single observation is sufficient to prove how different proceedings at Old Bailey are from what we know in France. Every five minutes there are long pauses. The judge raises his finger—not his head, which remains bowed over his desk, and the witness who has spoken too quickly grows silent. The judge must write down his words and this takes a few minutes. Nobody says a word.

At last a word about the members of the London jury, who in appearance are very much like ours in France. They are mostly business men in a small way, but they seem to have a far better conception of their responsibilities and duties than their Paris colleagues. They are less pompous, make more notes, exchange remarks and put their questions almost as well as the "barristers." It is almost incredible how quickly they reach a decision. They remain in their seats and discuss the case. As soon as they have agreed, the foreman makes a sign, and mumbles "guilty" and the sentence follows immediately.

At the other end of the courtroom, far below these judges, there are doubt, quarreling, lying. The witnesses are reckless or contradict themselves. To calm his conscience, the jouryman needs only look at the judge. The less often he interrupts, the greater is his authority when he admits or strikes out certain parts of the evidence in doubtful cases, when he sums up, or even when he says: "You must acquit; the prosecution has not proved its case."

THE HAREM SKIRT

BY COUNTESS RUSSELL.

The attacks made on the harem skirt show only too plainly what women have to contend with when an effort is made to break away from a convention which has proved a source of misery for ages. For such have proved the long voluminous draperies, which hamper their movements and are a deterrent to muscular development, as well as being a source of disseminating disease; for the danger of trailing skirts has been pointed out again and again. When one thinks of the discomfort arising from the weight of three or four garments, all fastened at the waist and dragging the unfortunate victim down with yards of unnecessary material, put in folds and plaits which are neither useful nor beautiful, is it not a sign of sanity on the part of women to seek to adopt a garment which will take the place of at least two of these old coverings, and give to its wearers at least an opportunity of moving freely and gracefully?

But the divided skirt is an innovation that undoubtedly frightens our menfolk. In spite of the fact that they must have suffered greatly in the past trying to keep pace with the short mincing steps which their draperies have forced upon women, they do not take kindly to the idea of their womenfolk sharing with them a privilege they have long enjoyed. The last time I was at the theatre a harem skirt was presented on the stage, and was greeted by howls of derision, and shrieks of laughter by the masculine element around me, which showed how subject men are to surface thought.

They do not realize to what extent the dress of women has proved a factor in cramping their development both physically and mentally, or they would gladly welcome any change which would free them from the burden of doctor's bills, and the annoyances caused by sick headaches, occurrences which have not at any time added to the happiness of home life. Any improvement in this direction is surely to be welcomed; and it is because I consider the harem skirt, when properly made, an ideal garment for my sex, that I wish to see it given a fair chance.

The last attack on the harem skirt is so silly and stupid that I felt it should be answered at once. At the Nottingham Chamber of Commerce a few nights ago a resolution was passed which was to be forwarded to the Associated Chambers in London containing the following extraordinary statements: "That the fancy and other textile trades of this country are gravely injured by the extravagant and grotesque vagaries of Paris fashion and it would conduce to greater stability and diminished losses in these trades if legitimate leaders of English society were to set the fashion for English ladies' dresses instead of adopting those set by irresponsible persons in Paris."

I would like to ask in what way are the fancy and other textile trades of this country injured by the harem skirt? I confess to the crime of possessing one, and so far I may claim to be an authority on the subject. It is made of British cloth, it is trimmed with British buttons, and has been made by a British firm of dressmakers. I defy the man in the street to detect that it is a divided skirt, as the legs are wide and loose, and two panels which are buttoned half way down hide the division. I can walk comfortably without being weighed down with quite unnecessary material, and there is no dragging of cloth to hamper my movements.

Of course, anyone, even the most simple, can see one loss to the trade. Less material is used for this really graceful and healthy garment; but, I should judge, not much less than that used for the skirt which was worn three years ago, and a great deal more than the amount used for the hobble skirt of last year, which I acknowledge was both ugly and hampering to free movement. But it had the advantage of being inches off the ground.

Now I should like to know why women should be obliged to go on wearing yards of unnecessary cloth in order to help the "trade," when they would prefer to be garbed in a healthful hygienic garment which is a pleasure to themselves and the onlooker. The women who go to extremes and wear a gathered-in bag round the ankles, like the picture we have of Morlesna Fenwig's extremities, will be mobbed, and the ugliness of the garment calls for punishment. But its very hideousness will destroy this type, and the panel-hiding dividing skirt will be the one most universally adopted and worn.

None of the designs for evening wear, that I have seen, are either beautiful or necessary. One does not want to stride about a house and the huge clumsy ruffles of satin, which the designs show gathered round the ankle, only serve to make large feet look bigger, and disfigure small ones. I am sure it would be quite easy to have a drapery flowing and graceful to cover the divided skirt, possessing the necessary number of yards to satisfy the demands of the "trade," and to relieve their minds from the burden of the dread of the disaster from which they are now suffering. But man-like they rush into extremes through fright, and perhaps this common sense statement may help to assure them that this new change in women's dress is not "extravagant," but of a sensible nature, and what the "trade" loses in yards will be made up to the nation in the improved health of its woman-kind, which will mean a happier state of things all round.

Of one thing I am assured—that the harem skirts has come to stay, and that it will prove one of the factors in the emancipation of women, which is the secret of its interest for me.

It Is Possible to Reduce Flesh Without Dieting or Exercise

It is not only possible, but being done everywhere. Exercise, unless carefully superintended by a physician and expert Athletic Director, may easily do a deal of harm to the great overburdened fleshy body. The untutored fat man and woman determined to get thin are only too likely to overstrain their fat encumbered muscles by their awkward, ill-advised gymnastics, and so cause nerve and muscle troubles that may develop into something far worse than a little too much flesh. Same way with dieting. Starvation is certainly effective if kept up long and faithfully enough, but it is almost certain to injure the nutritive process, and so weaken the patient constitutionally, while it is abominable torture, of course, especially to a good-natured, high-living, hearty man or woman.

Fortunately neither dieting nor exercising are required or desirable if one uses the right remedy for reducing fat, and, strange to say, the remedy is a simple, wholesome home mixture, the ingredients of which are obtainable at any drug store for a few cents. This mixture is as follows: ½ oz. Marmola, ½ oz. Fluid Extract Cascara Aromatic, 3½ ozs. Peppermint Water, and the proper amount to take is one teaspoonful after meals and at bedtime. This mixture takes the fat off rapidly but naturally, so that no wrinkles are formed and no harm is done to the stomach, as is so frequently the case with "Patent" or "secret" advertised remedies.